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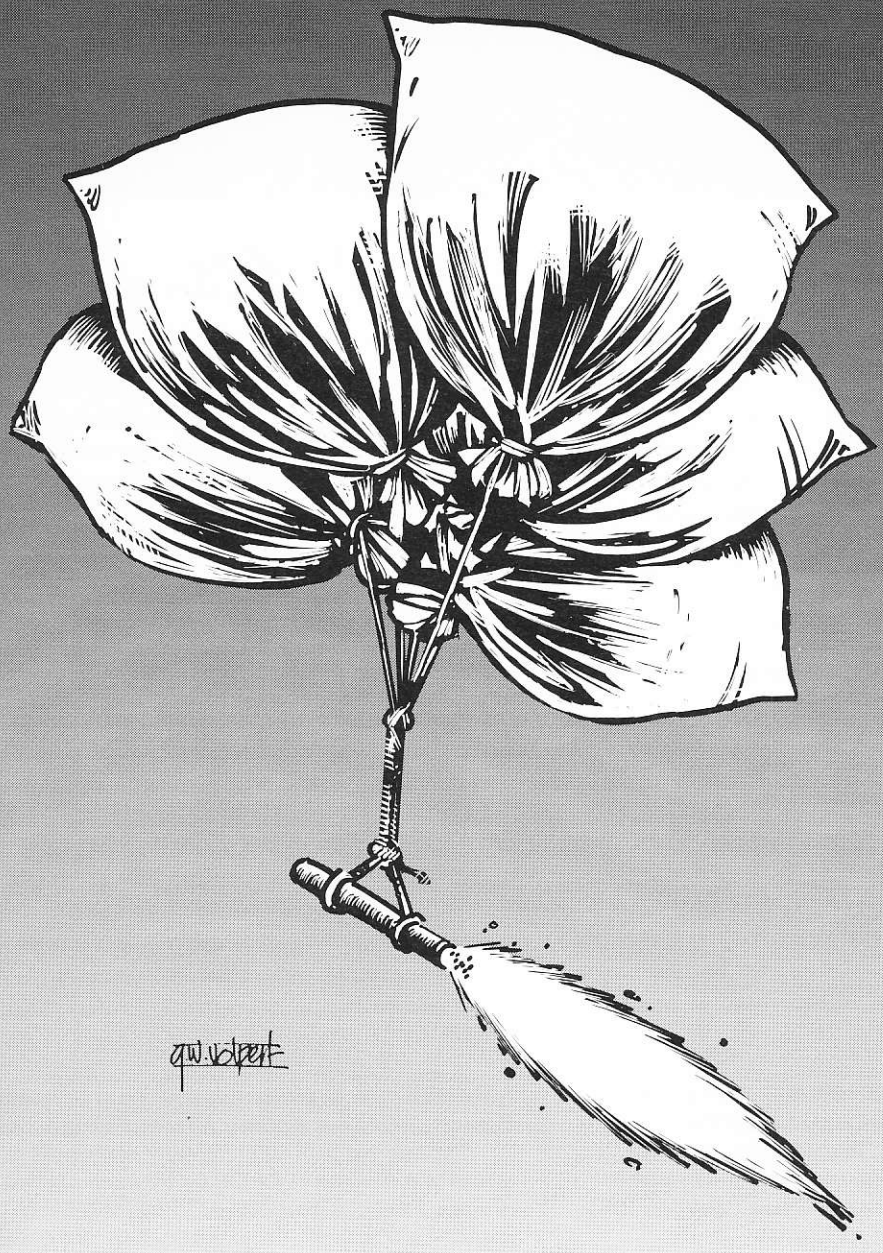

Balloons on the gulf breeze

INTERNATIONAL UFO REPORTER

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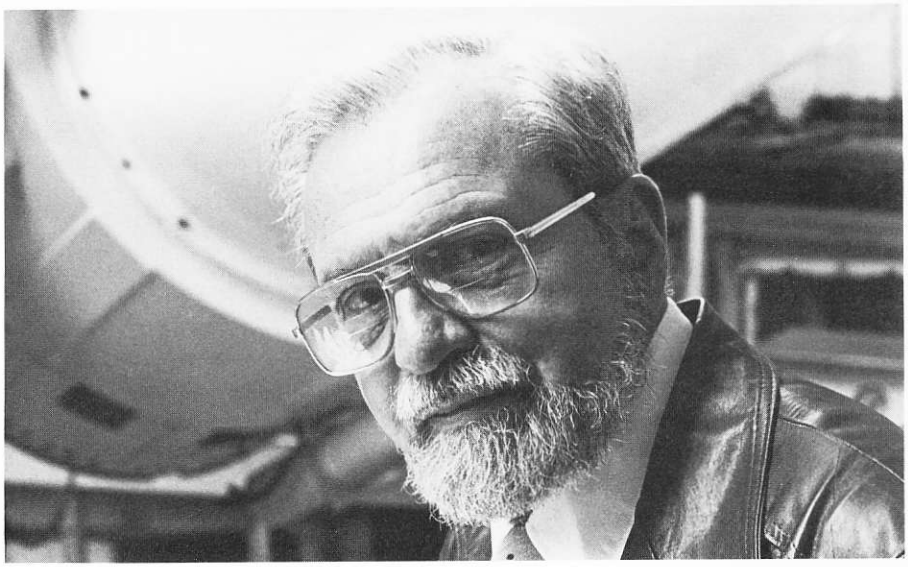

J. Allen Hynek
1910 - 1986

It is the persistence of the UFO reports, and the contents of those reports, that constitute the UFO phenomenon; it is this phenomenon that must be studied and its validity judged independently of any hypothesis of its origin. To do otherwise is simply not honest science.

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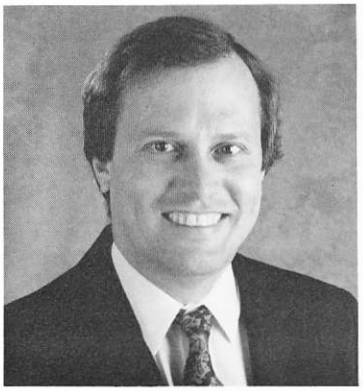
THAT'S THE WAY THE COMMITTEE CRUMBLES



Jerome Clark

In case you didn't know it, the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP)—aka "the lone voice defending rationality" (Chairman Paul Kurtz, *Skeptical Inquirer* [*SI*], Winter 1992, page 117)—is in dire straits these days, at the receiving end of a series of lawsuits filed by Uri Geller. Depending on your point of view, Geller is the most remarkable psychic of his generation or a charismatic sleight-of-hand artist. CUFOS and *IUR* are not required to have an opinion, or even frankly to care very much, about which of these more accurately characterizes Geller.

CSICOP, of course, has always cared deeply, to the point of obsession, about Geller's method of bending spoons and managed to elevate a question which ought to be of interest only to parapsychologists and magicians into an issue sufficiently threatening to demand both the urgent attention of Western civilization and the rapid infusion of as much cash as you can spare into CSICOP's bank account. CSICOP long ago eschewed "scientific investigation" for itself (*SI*, Spring 1982, page 9), though retaining its middle name so as to continue to wow the rubes—CSICOP's use of "scientific" is as calculated as the Moral Majority's is of "moral"—but it just as long ago demonstrated that what it lacks in scientific seriousness (see, for one example, Dennis Rawlins' "Starbaby," October 1981 *Fate* or, for another, any of Philip J. Klass' books), it more than compensates for in its extraordinary ability to promote itself and to maintain a fat bank balance.

Currently, even as Chairman Kurtz frets that the Lone Voice Defending Rationality may be stilled (thus necessitating a new round of fund-raising letters), CSICOP is busily hustling millions to construct a huge Center for Inquiry from which CSICOP, *SI*, and related heresy-bashing entrepreneurial enterprises will be able to combat the irrational hordes in space and comfort—all the while keeping up the pretense that they are displaying immense courage and making enormous sacrifices against vastly superior forces.

This is what the experts call a "rhetorical strategy." In the real world, of course, the odds are stacked hugely in CSICOP's favor. Most magazine and newspaper articles on CSICOP read like press releases, and *Science*, the *New York Review of Books*, *Nature*, *Scientific American*, *Science News*, *Time*, *Washington Post*, and practically every other elite organ hold the line, which is that any sympathetic consideration of anomalous phenomena, however cautious, is pseudoscientific by definition. Few of the authors of any of these have ever heard of the *Journal of UFO Studies*, the *Journal of Parapsychology*, the *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, or *Cryptozoology*—all sober, refereed scientific periodicals—and CSICOP is not about to enlighten them.

Even the *New York Times*, which soon lost its enthusiasm for CSICOP and occasionally strays off the reservation (notably in John Noble Wilford's enthusiasm for cryptozoology and in Nicholas Wade and William Broad's jaded view of how science really operates), never strays far enough to alarm anybody unduly. Probably only the *Wall Street Journal* should give the heresy-hunters any worries, but in any given year only one or two articles defy "rationalist" correcthink, and even the Lone Voice of Rationality has yet to identify these as threats to the fabric of civilization. After all, the *Journal* once ran one of those press-release-style articles—titled "People Will Believe Anything, Which Is Why Csicop [sic] Exists" (July 19, 1985)—and so can be forgiven, at least for now, though I am sure it is under observation.

CSICOP's ability to influence media is legendary. Its *Manual for Local, Regional and National Groups* devotes 17 pages to "Handling the Media" and "Public Relations" and, tellingly, a mere three to "Scientific Investigations." Early on Dennis Rawlins, a CSICOP founder who later became bitterly disillusioned, observed that CSICOP had less interest in "open-ended scientific research" than in "media wheeling and dealing."

Meanwhile the treatment of anomalies, including UFOs, remains safely ghettoized. If UFO stories continue to be reliably popular media fare, no sweat; the coverage seldom escapes the confines of the tabloids, print and electronic, and so to most serious persons UFO sightings continue to seem (except to those individuals unfortunate enough to experience them) as trivial as celebrity gossip. Serious anomalies research, whose existence the Lone Voice of Rationality rarely acknowledges for obvious reasons, continues to be a shoestring operation, reported in magazines and journals with a fraction of *SI*'s budget and circulation. Here the odds really *are* against those conducting scientific

continued on page 11

Langenburg, 1974: A Classic Historical CE2 and a Crop Circle Progenitor?

by Chris Rutkowski and John P. Timmerman

Chris Rutkowski of Ufology Research Manitoba is a contributing editor to *IUR*. John P. Timmerman is treasurer of CUFOS.

One of the most contentious issues in crop-circle research is whether or not crop circles are a relatively new phenomenon, described only since about 1980, or are only the most recent variant of the familiar CE2/trace cases from historical ufology. Furthermore, it has been suggested that crop circles are a phenomenon largely confined to an area of southern England and that similar formations elsewhere in the world are not related to modern cerealogy.

With this in mind, we have undertaken a renewed interest in the examination of historical CE2/trace records in the ufological literature, in the hope of finding comparative or conflicting characteristics that may answer the question of the possible kinship of modern crop circles and historical physical traces, now termed UGMs (unusual ground markings).

According to a *Fact Sheet for Crop Circle Researchers* prepared by Ralph Noyes for the London-based Center for Crop Circle Studies, crop circles are flattened areas that occur:

(a) within growing crops
(b) during the season of growth
(c) confined to the boundaries of a field
(d) exhibit a gentleness of effect, with no macroscopic damage.

It is claimed that few reliable records of crop circles exist prior to 1980, when the phenomena came under systematic study by British cerealogists, and that historical cases are "few in number, none [have] the complexity of the events of the late 1980s/early 1990s, and most are poorly evidenced." In short, there is "little supporting detail . . . that the crop circle phenomenon has a long and continuous history."

This position has unsettled many ufologists, who had investigated and gathered data on many physical-trace cases with strong apparent similarities to crop circles decades before the crop-circle phenomenon began. Ted Phillips' *Catalogue of Physical Traces*, published in July 1975, lists hundreds of reports of CE2s that involved the flattening of grass or crops after a UFO landing. In addition, the same catalogue contains many trace cases involving the discovery of flattened areas without any associated UFO activity. Before he left active ufology, Phillips' collection of trace cases was said to number over 4000.

Admittedly, many trace cases include such things as burn marks, "tripod marks," angel hair, and holes in the ground. These are the macroscopic effects that are not considered related to crop circles. (Yet we can wonder where such cases went during the British crop-circle wave, since these common UGMs are consistently reported worldwide.) Disregarding all UGMs other than the flattened circles, we still have many historical reports to take into account.

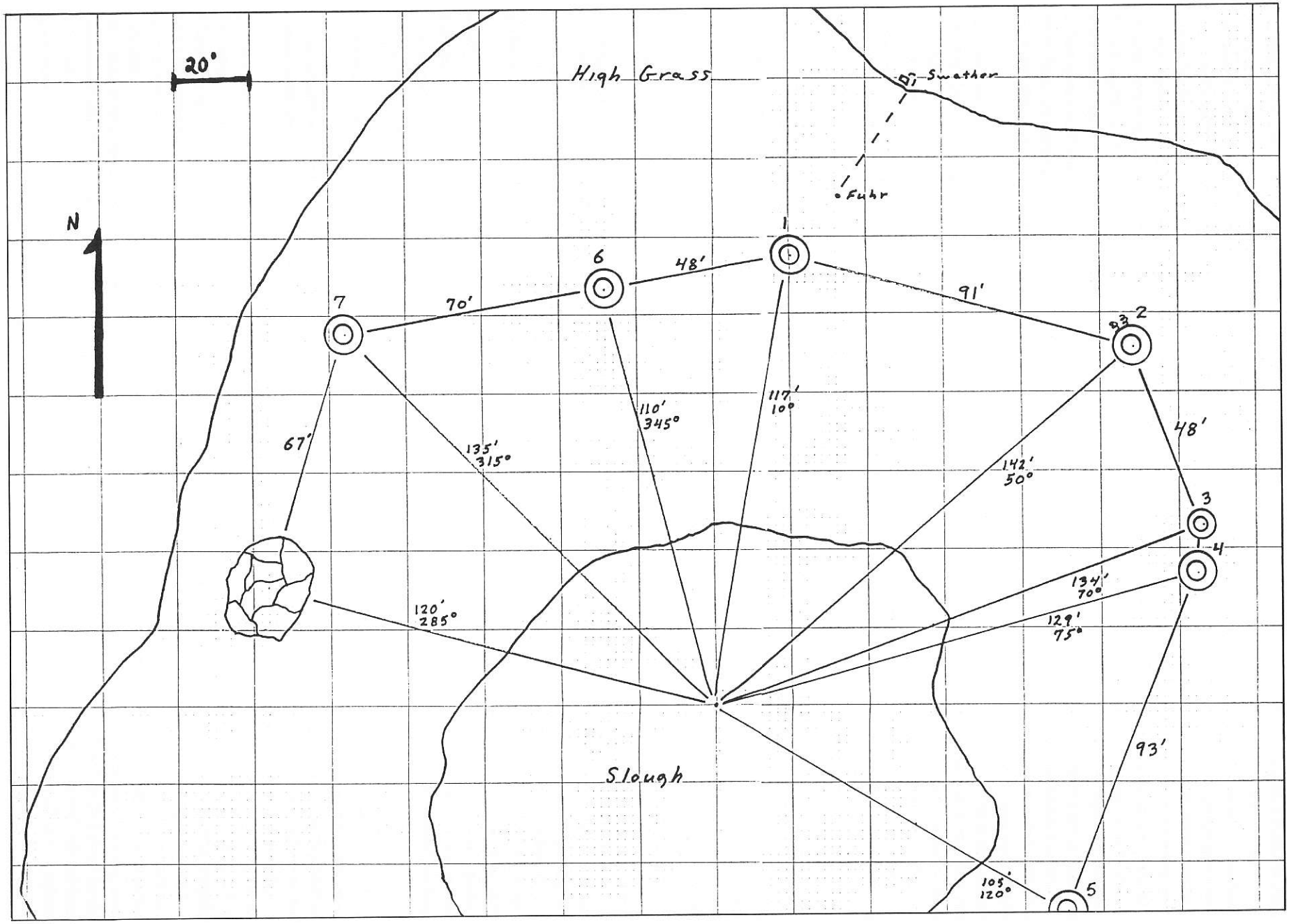
Langenburg

On September 18, 1974, J. Allen Hynek received a newspaper clipping about the Langenburg incident from a correspondent in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He conferred with Ted Phillips, then began making inquiries in Saskatchewan about the case. Because it seemed like a good case, arrangements were made for Phillips to travel to Langenburg on September 21. Phillips interviewed the witness, Edwin Fuhr, as well as Fuhr's mother and the investigating RCMP officer, Ron Morier.

The summary of the event is as follows, from Phillips' report:

Shortly after 10 on Sunday morning, September 1, 1974, Edwin Fuhr, a 36-year-old farmer, began harvesting his rape crop in a field located some 1,500 ft. south of his home. After Fuhr had been swathing for nearly an hour he was closing on a slough located at the south end of the field. As he approached the slough he slowed the swather to a crawl, looked up to check his position relative to the grassy area and saw a metal dome about 50 ft. away, sitting in the grassy area between the slough and the crop area. At first he thought it was a metal goose blind. He stopped the swather and walked to within 15 ft. of the object.

As he approached the metal dome he noticed that the grass around the base was moving and the object itself was spinning at a high rate of speed. Fuhr became quite frightened and backed


20'
N
High Grass
Swather
Fuhr
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
48'
91'
70'
67'
110'
345°
117'
10°
135'
315°
142'
50°
48'
120'
285°
134'
70°
129'
75°
93'
105'
120°
Slough

away toward the swather which was still running at full throttle.

When he reached the swather he moved behind it and climbed up to seat. At this point he could see the spinning dome from a slightly higher elevation. As he glanced to the left he saw four more metal domes, all the same size and all were spinning. They seemed to be hovering 12 to 18 inches above ground level. The grass was moving at the base of each object. Two of the objects (3 & 4) were very near each other . The objects were arranged in a rough semi-circle around the slough. He could hear no sound as the swather was running.

As he watched he could see what appeared to be grooves of a slightly darker color on the spinning dome; no other surface details were seen. Fuhr tried to push the swather into gear but couldn't move the throttle or the steering wheel. He admits that he can't be sure if he was just weak from extreme fear or if the swather was not reacting properly to the touch.

After watching for what seemed to be several minutes, the objects suddenly burst into the air. The near object (1) left the ground first, followed by the remaining four (5 ascending last). The objects ascended in a step formation into the overcast sky. Suddenly, at about 200 ft. they stopped, a puff of dark gray "vapor" was seen coming from exhaust-like extensions located at the base of each of the objects. The vapor was about 6 ft. in length and was followed by a downward gust of wind which almost knocked Fuhr's hat off and flattened the rape that was standing in the immediate area. The ascent took only seconds, after reaching the 200 ft. altitude the objects formed a perfect line and remained stationary for perhaps 1 to 2 minutes. They suddenly ascended into the low cloud cover and disappeared. Fuhr remained on the swather for at least 2 minutes after they were gone.

Fuhr learned later that cattle in a nearby field were bellowing and had broken through a fence in four places at about the time of the sighting!

After the ascent, Fuhr went to the landing area and found five rings of depressed grass. The #2 site had what appeared to be probe areas where the grass was depressed in 3 ft. long areas leading away from the ring on the north side. The grass was swirled in a clockwise fashion at all the sites. The grass was not dead and had not been heated or burned.

The official explanation of the case was given to the media by archskeptic Allen MacNamara of the National Research Council of Canada and published across Canada on September 27, 1974. MacNamara, who admitted he had not investigated the case but had only read the RCMP reports, was quoted as saying that the rings on the Fuhr farm were "exactly the same as the 'fairy rings' which can vary in diameter from a few feet to a good fraction of a mile" (*Regina Leader-Post*, September 27, 1974).

Other experts were called upon to lend support to MacNamara's off-the-cuff explanation, including one mycologist who noted that after fairy-ring mushrooms kill plant growth in the center of an area, the grass "in the center grows back better than before . . . of course, none of this explains the five saucer-shaped objects seen by Mr. Fuhr except for the fact that . . . well, it seems some mushrooms produce a luminous glow."

As readers of the report narrative above will realize, fairy-ring mushrooms could not in any way be used to explain the Fuhr case. What was not added in the description of the fungi is that they do not form circles over a very short period of time, they do not form in cultivated crops, and they do not leave grass flattened in the manner found. Most ufologists with experience in trace cases are familiar with examples of crop pathology, and fairy rings do not account for the "saucer nest" variety of UGMs. Other crop growth effects such as lodging are more likely as possible explanations, but the fairy-ring explanation, used most often by uninformed debunkers, is not viable in most circumstances.

We can note, however, that the Fuhr circles were not found in the rape field, but in a soggy, unseeded area of a slough, left untouched because of its rocky, boggy soil. This might suggest that fairy rings could possibly form (in fact, mushrooms were found underneath some flattened grass), but the appearance was clearly unlike that of any fairy rings.

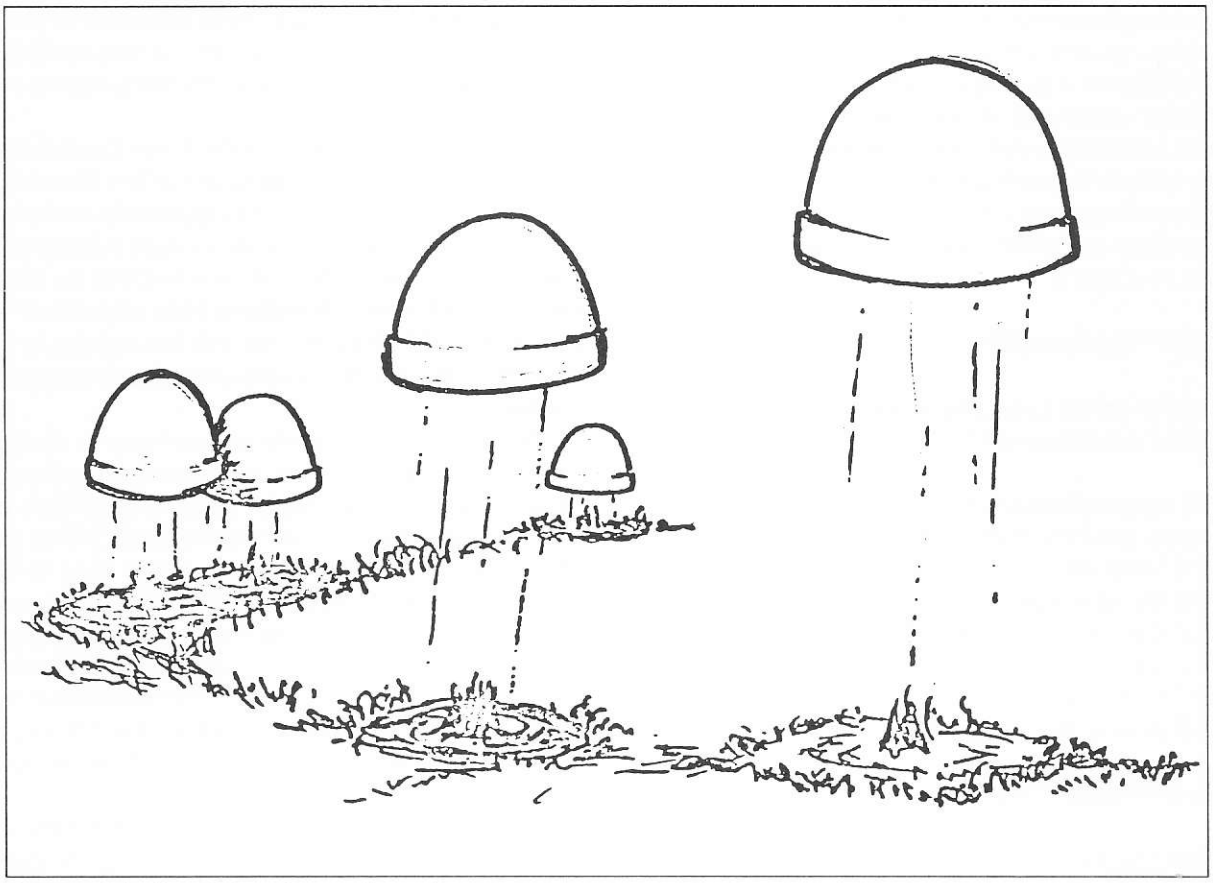
Additional circles in the area

At this point the Langenburg circles have all the characteristics of British crop circles except one: they were made in grass, not "cultivated crops." But what is not generally known about the Langenburg case is that there were several more circles found in the immediate area and throughout the province at that time, and some of these were in cultivated crops.

On September 3 Fuhr found a new, sixth crop circle in formation with the original five. On September 15 a seventh circle was found, again in a formation resembling an arc with theother six circles.

But on September 14 three more rings were found on another farm about a mile east of the Fuhr site, this time in a cultivated crop. They were of comparative size to the Fuhr circles and had no associated UFO activity. Also on that day, a strange circle of wheat was found flattened and twisted counter-clockwise near Young, Saskatchewan, over 200 miles northwest of Langenburg. The diameter of that ring was 14 feet, and its width was 24 inches. Additional rings were found at sites near Peebles, Lake Lenore, and Dinsmore, Saskatchewan, over the next few weeks, all in wheat. Altogether no fewer than 15 circles were found (reported) at seven different sites in Saskatchewan.

What is curious is that the area around Langenburg appears to have an extensive history of both UFO cases and crop-circle-like UGMs (perhaps British cerealogists should consider travelling to Canada on crop-circle expeditions to visit this prolific location). In the fall of 1967, farmers near Willen, Manitoba, about 50 miles southeast of Langenburg, found several rings while swathing their wheat field. On September 4, 1977, not far away near Rossburn, Manitoba, a farmer came upon as many as 25 circles as he was swathing his wheat field. UFOs were not associated with either of these discoveries.



Ascent of the five objects in step formation

PHILLIPS' CONCLUSIONS

The discussion of the Langenburg evidence by CUFOS' investigator echoes the remarks by cerealogists today, nearly 20 years later. He wrote:

It would be impossible to imagine the creation, by nature, of even one of the Langenburg rings. As indicated by measurements taken at the site, the rings are almost perfectly circular. When one takes into consideration that we are dealing with not one, but *seven* such areas [at the Fuhr site], a natural cause seems rather far removed. One must remember that the sites were all swirled in the same clockwise pattern, all were of very nearly the same dimensions and all had the same type of undisturbed central section.

Regarding the hoax theory, he had this to say:

The perpetration of such a hoax would have involved a great deal of time. Fuhr, like all the farmers in the area, depends on his crops for income. I cannot believe that he would have taken the necessary time during harvest to create even one ring, certainly not seven. The last thing a farmer wants at harvest time is several thousand people walking through his crops and that is exactly what he had. He did not contact the news media and was even hesitant to relate the event to his own family. The RCMP was satisfied that no device had been driven or rolled into the area as there were no marks in the high grass other than the rings.

THE EXPLANATIONS

There would be three explanations for the Langenburg case, given modern cerealogical thought. One is hoax, which is considered unlikely because no marks indicate access to the remote site and because Fuhr did not seek publicity and was unwilling to report his experience even to his own family or close friends.

The UFO theory is generally advocated in this type of experience because of the observation of physical craft. Indeed, taken at face value, Fuhr's story seems clearly to indicate that extraordinary vehicles created the markings in the field.

A different interpretation of the same observation is advocated by Terence Meaden, who is the proponent of the plasma-vortex theory of crop-circle formation. Recently Meaden has extended his theory to allow observations of apparently physical flying craft (UFOs) creating landing traces as proof that ionized plasmas may *seem* to be solid objects. Since Meaden has supported the contention that an apparently physical "flying saucer" observed in the Soviet Union in 1990 (and which left a circular disturbed area on a frozen lake) was possible proof of a plasma vortex, it is probable that the Langenburg case might be considered as being created by the same mechanism. But Fuhr approached to within 15 feet of one of the UFOs, and a good case could be made that at that distance it would have been possible to

distinguish a plasma from a physical structure. (It should be noted that the plasma-vortex theory of crop circleformation and UFO observations is by no means embraced by either the ufology community or conventional scientific establishment, and it may be only another example of misapplied science towards the explanation of unusual phenomena in much the same manner as the tectonic strain theory [TST] of anomalous and paranormal phenomena proposed by Michael Persinger.)

Phillips' trace cases

In his report on the Langenburg case, Ted Phillips noted that he had at that time (1974):

- 756 reports of observations of unidentified flying objects involving physical traces.
- 12% involved landing sites described as rings.
- 10% [have] a depressed ring surface.
- 22% [had] ring diameters between eight and twelve feet.
- 20% [had] ring width between one and two feet.
- 18% [had a] disc-shaped object seen at [the] site.

He noted about Langenburg in particular:

The Langenburg event is almost totally unique in one respect—of the total landing-trace cases, only one other report involves the landing of more than two UFOs at a given site. That one report took place near Trancas, Argentina, on October 21, 1963, with the landing of six UFOs.

Recent studies of the Langenburg case

In the intervening years between 1974 and the present, several UFO and physical-trace reports have originated in the Langenburg area. These have been duly recorded by civilian groups such as UFOROM (Ufology Research of Manitoba) and government/military personnel such as the RCMP and NRC.

In June 1991 John Timmerman of CUFOS brought the CUFOS traveling UFO exhibit to a mall in Yorkton, Saskatchewan, not far from Langenburg. There Chris Rutkowski and Jeff Harland of UFOROM assisted him with the display and in the interviewing of witnesses who came forward as a result of the display. Arrangements were made for Edwin Fuhr to come to the mall to meet with the three ufologists. An extensive interview resulted, reviewing the case and adding some possible new information.

First of all, Fuhr now believes that the objects were not quite featureless; he claims that he had the impression of "something on the outside like rivets of some kind, but you couldn't tell if there was a window in it or not."

Second, Fuhr claimed that the sixth circle found was partly on top of a large rock. He said that the "scientists dug the rock out" and took it away. There is no record of such a rock in any other account, and Phillips' notes do not include anything about a rock. Since thousands of people visited the Fuhr site, however, any one of them could have described him or herself as a scientist and taken the rock away.

A significant comment by Fuhr during this interview related to another previously unreported effect. He said that a Russell, Manitoba, man who had apparently worked at a nuclear-research institute brought a geiger counter to the Fuhr site during the 1980s. Fuhr was told that the slough was indeed radioactive. In addition, Fuhr related that "undercover RCMP" visited the site with him and that he was shown that radioactivity was detected on their own geiger counters.

This issue of radioactivity seemed easy to clear up. Timmerman asked Fuhr if he could lead the three back to the site to get more soil samples. He agreed, but there was a problem; he said he'd "have to go to the RCMP to get a release for it." It seemed that others had tried to take samples away but were somehow blocked from doing so by the RCMP. Fuhr went on to note that he had "signed papers that no soil can be released unless they [the RCMP] release it." Fuhr stated that the order to prevent soil material from leaving the site was written by Constable Morier, the original investigating officer from whom Phillips had received outstanding cooperation.

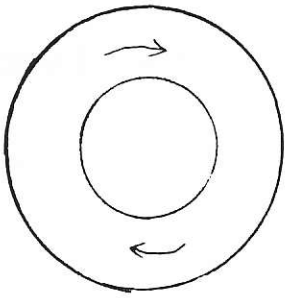
Preliminary inquiries into this strange situation have not been fruitful. Researchers are awaiting an official statement from the local RCMP. Perhaps tests for residual radioactivity in the soil at the Fuhr site can be obtained eventually to verify or contest such claims.

Finally, after considerable review of his memories regarding the incident, Fuhr believes that he experienced some "missing time." From his original interview by Phillips in 1974:

P: From the very first observation until they disappeared into the clouds, how long did you see them?
F: The most it could have been was 15 to 20 minutes. It could have lasted more or less, I can't be sure.
P: What would have been the shortest time?
F: 10 minutes, maybe. I just don't know. I don't know how long I sat in the swather. I can't remember that part. After it was over I looked at my watch. It was 15 after 11. When I first saw them I didn't look at my watch. It could have been around 10:30, I just don't know. I knew I had went out about 9:30 . . . . How long I watched them I don't know. I do know that I stood there. My feet wouldn't move for two minutes. How long I was in the swather I don't know. I was like, I guess, in shock. I just kept staring at those things. I couldn't take my eyes off them. . . .

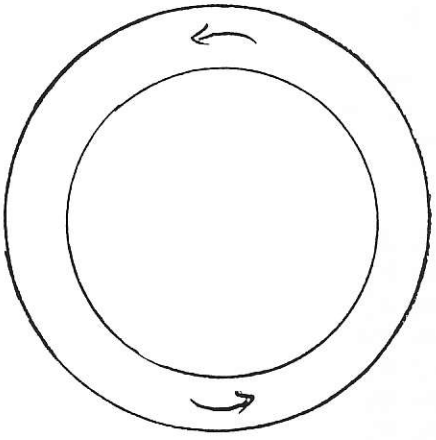
Later in the interview:

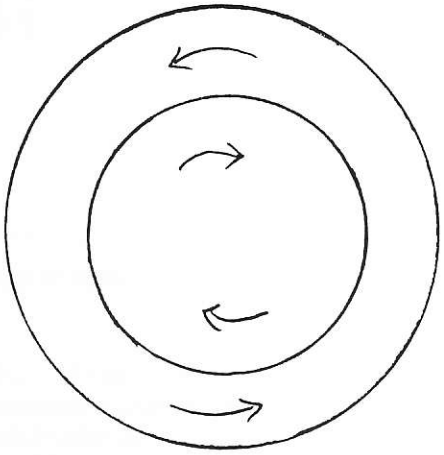
P: After the objects left, you waited two minutes. Then what did you do?
F: After I looked at the marks I continued to swath for



Typical Fuhr site circle

Typical Rossburn site circle





Typical Willen site circle

(all approximately to scale)

(arrows indicate direction of swirl)

Comparative Sizes of Crop Circles Discussed in the Text

UGM	N-S DIAM.	E-W DIAM.	N-S RING WIDTH	E-W RING WIDTH
FUHR #1	11.0	11.0	2.6	2.7
FUHR #2	11.0	10.3	2.5	2.1
FUHR #3	8.0	8.0	2.0	2.0
FUHR #4	10.0	10.0	2.3	2.3
FUHR #5	11.0	10.8	2.5	2.9
FUHR #6	INDISTINCT			
FUHR #7	10.3	9.8	2.4	2.0
WILLEN #1	13.0	13.0	2.6	2.6
WILLEN #2	13.0	13.0	2.6	2.6
WILLEN #3	13.0	13.0	2.6	2.6
WILLEN #4	13.0	13.0	2.6	2.6
WILLEN #5	13.0	13.0	2.6	2.6
WILLEN #6	6.0	6.0	1.5	1.5
HAVERSTOCK #1	INDISTINCT			
HAVERSTOCK #2	8.1	8.0	2.0	2.0
HAVERSTOCK #3	10.0	9.0	2.1	1.6
YOUNG	14.0	14.0	2.0	2.0
PEEBLES	6.0	6.0	1.5	1.5
ROSSBURN #1	8.0	8.0	2.0	2.0
ROSSBURN #2	8.0	8.0	2.0	2.0
ROSSBURN #3A	16.0	16.0	2.5	2.5
ROSSBURN #3B	16.0	16.0	2.5	2.5
ROSSBURN #4	16.0	16.0	2.0	2.0
ROSSBURN #5	20.0	20.0	2.0	2.0
ROSSBURN #6	20.0	20.0	2.0	2.0
ROSSBURN #7	20.0	20.0	2.0	2.0
ROSSBURN #8	20.0	20.0	2.0	2.0
ROSSBURN #9	10.0	8.0	2.5	2.0

(ALL DIMENSIONS ARE GIVEN IN FEET)

quite a while because I didn't know how to tell those guys at home. That was my problem. When I got home they asked me, "What's the matter?" I was all pale in the face. I didn't say nothing. I washed and tried to eat and I was trying to think how I could tell them about this thing. I went in for lunch about 12:30.

(But in 1991, during the interview with Timmerman and others, Fuhr stated that he had sat on the swather a much longer time and did not arrive home until about 2:00. He estimated the time he has spent watching while sitting on the swather was "about an hour and a half." He claimed that his relatives had been waiting a long time for him to come home.)

Fuhr's mother noted his state of mind in a separate interview:

I was just here from church when Edwin came in . . . . He acted altogether different. He was sorta . . . worked up, he was so worked up that he could hardly eat dinner . . . . He said, "I don't want nothing, I'm not really hungry" . . . . I said, "Why?" . . . . and he said, "I saw something this morning" . . . . and his dad was sitting there and said, "What do you mean you saw something?" . . . . and Edwin said, "Oh, I can't even describe it to you" . . . . His dad went out with him to look at the marks, and Edwin came back pale as a ghost and said, "What next is going to happen?"

Later, RCMP Constable Morier learned of the incident through Fuhr's brother-in-law. When he went there the next morning to interview Edwin Fuhr, he noted, "I could see that he was still, it appeared to me, to be quite shaken, you know, about this whole thing. He was jumpy, and you could see just by looking at the guy that he had been scared."

In Morier's opinion Edwin Fuhr was reliable and not prone to exaggeration. Morier believed Fuhr's story and noted in his official RCMP report, "The witness . . . has been known by a member of this detachment for a period of four years, and during this time he has not been known to materialize any such stories. He is a responsible person and his information is considered reliable."

In 1991, Fuhr commented that he believed "something" might have happened to him while he was observing the objects, but he could not recall any details. There did seem to be some discrepancies in the chronology of events, so Fuhr was asked:

R: Did anyone ever suggest that you had some missing time and that there is more to what happened?
F: Some fellows did and that I should go under hypnosis, and I won't go under hypnosis.
T: Do you have some special reason for not doing that?
F: I got that from professionals. They told me not to.

Pressed for details, Fuhr would only say that among the many, many people who had visited him since his experience, some "UFO experts" had told him not to undergo hypnosis. Reassurances of controlled clinical tests performed under the supervision of registered psychologists (who have worked with UFOROM on several occasions) did nothing to change his mind.

Clearly the case is becoming embellished after years of poking around by dozens of "experts." Today Fuhr relates stories of "investigators" loading their station wagons full of soil from the site and of persons claiming to be "from the government" doing seemingly redundant tests and measurements.

During the 1989 wave of UFO sightings in Canada, Fuhr was one of many Langenburg-area residents to have witnessed more UFOs, mostly nocturnal lights. He is regarded as something of a local celebrity, though he has yet to actively seek any publicity. He remains a meek yet stubborn individual who is showing signs of weariness from coping with the continuing interest in his experience nearly 20 years ago.

Final comments

What really happened to Edwin Fuhr in 1974? On the surface it would appear that he had a chance or deliberate encounter with five small, bowl-shaped flying saucers, probably remote-control drones. But new theories in ufology and cerealogy may lead to other interpretations.

Vortex theorists can use the case to bolster their belief that Fuhr observed five spinning plasma vortices, appearing to be solid and metallic but made only of ionized air.

TST proponents can suggest that Fuhr was inside an area teeming with electromagnetic energy created deep underground by stresses within the earth's strata. (Indeed, the Langenburg area does experience occasional earthquakes.) Either Fuhr observed ionized air created by such energy release at the earth's surface, or his temporal lobes were affected by this energy and so he hallucinated his experience. The creation of the depressed grass circles was only an incidental side effect of the released energy.

Skeptics will use Fuhr's bewildering testimony as evidence that he made up the whole story and produced the circles himself for some personal gains, perhaps to impress his family.

What should be obvious from the Fuhr case is that cerealogy is more related to ufology than is generally assumed. Moreover, it does appear that historical precedents for crop circles beyond Britain do exist, and cerealogists might do well to consider these cases when formulating theories concerning crop circle creation.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank CUFOS for its assistance in research of this case. In particular, appreciation is conveyed to Ted Phillips for his detailed investigation of the Langenburg case. Thanks also to UFOROM associates Victor Wei, Brian James, Jeff Harland, and Gary Lanham (who is now in Birmingham, England). Finally, we would like to thank Edwin Fuhr, who has been continually cooperative with researchers through the decades since his experience. ✦

EDITORIAL—*continued from page 3*

investigation of claims of the paranormal. Some of the handful of parapsychology laboratories have closed down for lack of funds—a fact that, when announced, inspired delighted applause at a recent CSICOP gathering, according to George Hansen, author of the splendid "CSICOP and the Skeptics: An Overview," *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* (January 1992).

One did not have to be a psychic to predict that eventually CSICOP would get into serious legal trouble, given the extravagance and recklessness of its rhetoric, about which even CSICOP Fellow and founder Ray Hyman —though no other significant figure within the leadership —has complained on occasion. Hyman once remarked to me on a "frightening fundamentalism" he had seen in the debunking ranks. Until its recent crisis CSICOP evinced little interest in moderation in speech or print. The one exception involved the quick squelching of a nobody who circulated a letter which, purporting to speak in CSICOP's name, sought to organize those who wanted to "get dirty"

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THE MEDJUGORJE UO

BY BRUCE MACCABEE

Bruce Maccabee, Ph.D., an optical physicist and UFO investigator of long standing, is chairman of the Fund for UFO Research.

Two years ago (in "A Rare Photo Coincidence," May/June 1990 *IUR*) I reported on the unusual coincidence between the shape of an unidentified object photographed over Hawaii in 1975 (Lindstrom photos) and an object videotaped in Japan in 1989 (Hamazaki videotape). Now what appears to be the same object has been photographed again, this time in Yugoslavia.

On September 19, 1991, Maria Kulis of Clinton, Massachusetts, was visiting Medjugorje, which is the site of recurrent, apparently spiritual events (including apparitions and luminous phenomena) which are not the subject of this discussion. She took a photo of the St. James Church at 6:35 p.m. (see the image of the clock in Figure 2) from a distance of about 500 feet. Upon later development of this and the other photos on the roll of film, she noticed an odd object in the sky almost above the church (see Figure 3). She did not recall seeing anything in the sky at the time of the photo, however.

In October she attended John White's UFO Experience meeting in North Haven, Connecticut, where she saw CUFOS' photo exhibit and met John P. Timmerman. Subsequently she sent Timmerman the photo and the original negative for analysis. Timmerman recognized the similarity between the unusual object and those in the Hawaii and Japan cases and sent the negatives to me.

Kulis informed me that she used a Canon MC-S 35mm auto focus camera with ASA 200 Kodak Gold color film (type 5096). She also sent me negatives that precede and follow the one of particular interest here. These others are typical tourist photos: street scenes, people, panoramic views, and countryside. They contain no anomalous images. The photos are of very good quality because of good focus and a reasonably fine film grain.

The analysis is rather straightforward because the Unusual Object (UO) was so clearly photographed. The image of the sky is a purplish blue at the upper left fading to a near white at the upper right. There are no clouds. The UO is silhouetted against a pale purplish blue background. The shape is much more distinct than in the Lindstrom 35mm slide photos (the UO in one of these is reproduced in Figure 1) and the Hamazaki videotape (see Figure 4, page 23, and the previous *IUR* article). The general shape is the same as that in the Lindstrom photos and the Hamazaki video.

There are differences, however. Both this and the Lindstrom photo images show, at the top, a squarish outlining band which is darker than the sky and darker than the lower portion. This band is lighter than the sky in the Hamazaki video. In the previous article I suggested that the bottoms of the images might be rounded, though I noted that the Lindstrom photo image is consistent with a pyramidal shape, with the point downward. In the Hamazaki video the bottom seems rounded, but the image is so indistinct that the object might actually have had a more pointed bottom.

Above the upper dark band in the Lindstrom photo there are bright spots, "lights," which don't appear in the Medjugorje photo. On the other hand, there appears to be a very slight blue "halo" around the Medjugorje image, a halo that does not appear around other images which are silhouetted against a similar sky background (church steeple, cross). The outline of the Medjugorje image has more structure; it seems more rugged than the outline of the Hamazaki or Lindstrom images. It could be that the outline structure was obscured by poor focus or greater distance in the Hamazaki and Lindstrom cases. The quality of focus of the UO is good and seems to be the same as that of the foreground and background images in the photo (see Figure 3).

The maximum angular size of the UO image is about 6.6 milliradians, corresponding to 6.6 feet if the object were 1000 feet away, 13.2 feet at 2000 feet, and so on. The angular elevation was about 17 degrees. Unfortunately the actual distance to the UO is not known, so the actual size cannot be calculated. If it were about as far away as the church, measured horizontally (about 500 feet), at 17 degrees' elevation, it would have been about 520 feet from the camera and hence about 3.4 feet in size. All that we can conclude from this analysis is that it was probably several feet or more in size.

The witness says she does not recall seeing the object at the time. Of course, she might have seen it and simply ignored it, concentrating instead on the scenery around the church. No one in the foreground of the photo appears to be paying any attention to it, though one person standing on the far side of the taxi looking away from the camera does have his head pointed roughly in the correct direction. From the photo we cannot discern whether he was looking upward or not. It is possible that a number of people saw it passing over and simply assumed it was some strange balloon. On the other hand, maybe some people realized it

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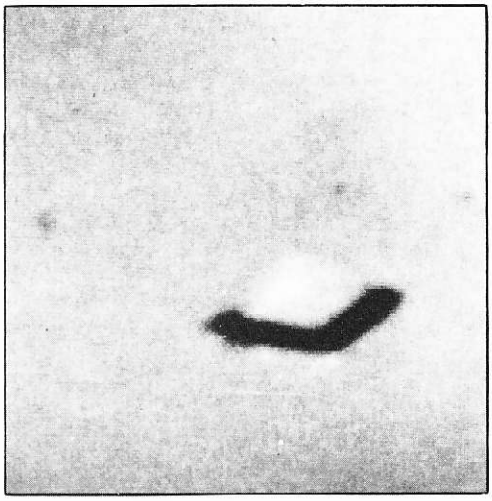


Figure 1: The Lindstrom photo

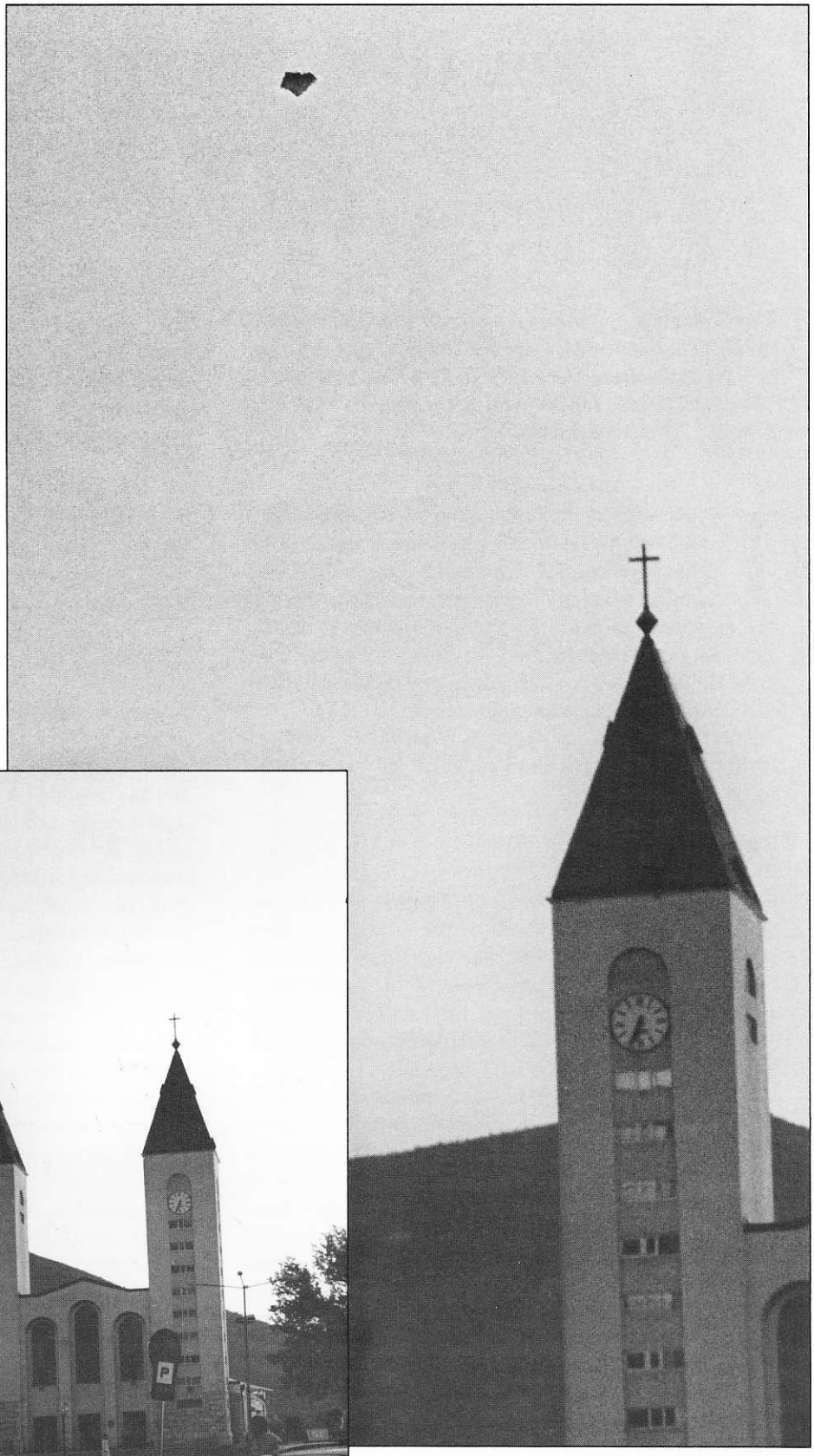


Figure 2: The original Medjugorje photo

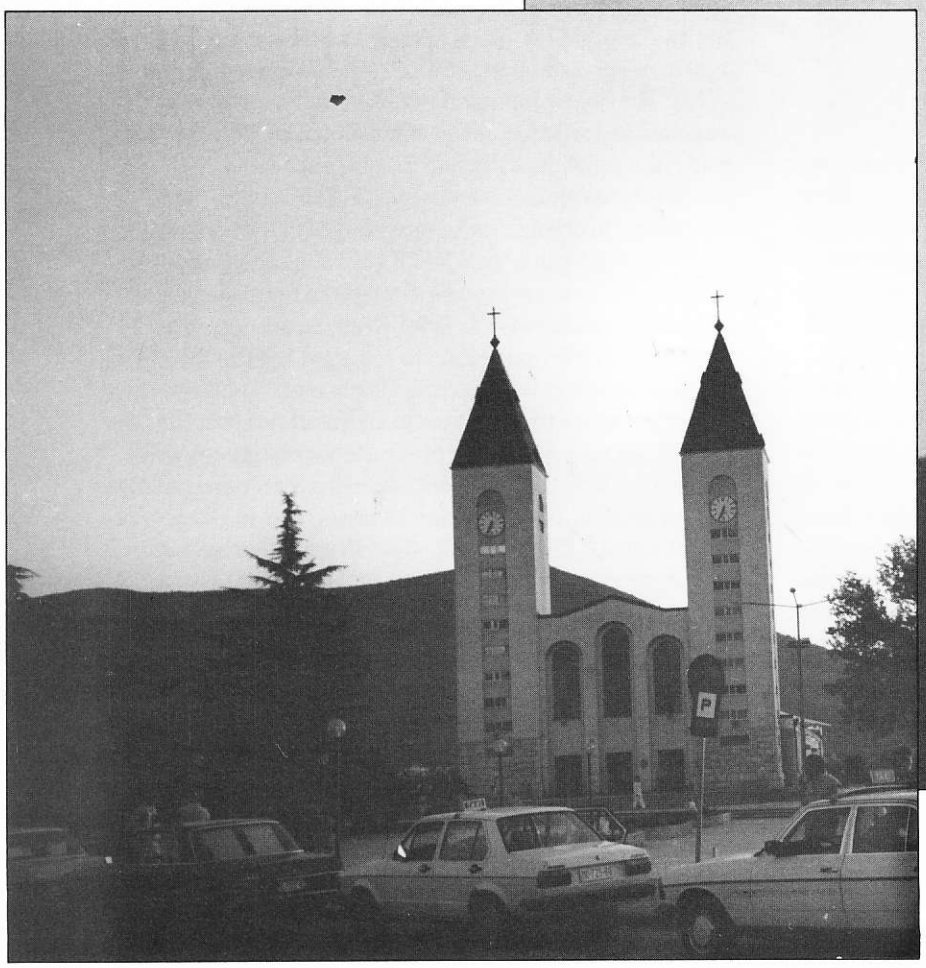


Figure 3: The Medjugorje UO (enlargement)

The Gulf Breeze RUFOs

by Zan Overall

Zan Overall, a Californian who has been interested in the UFO phenomenon since the 1950s, responds to two articles in January/February *IUR*: Bruce Maccabee's "The Gulf Breeze Lights" and Art Hufford's "The Gulf Breeze Lights, Continued."

In their articles in the last issue of *IUR*, Bruce Maccabee and Art Hufford describe recent sightings and photographs in Gulf Breeze, Florida. In their view the objects being seen are genuine UFOs. I would like to present evidence for another hypothesis: that the sightings can be explained as hoaxes, balloon-borne flares in the main. I suggest that the more recent reports have been of hoaxes employing other light sources.

Before I address the sightings listed by Maccabee and Hufford, let me describe events which led to the current wave.

The background

Ed Walters, the principal in the Gulf Breeze affair, has not taken a detailed photo of one of his uniquely designed "UFOs" since May 1, 1988. Skeptics believe he retired because he has been expected, even by his supporters, to abandon his Polaroid cameras for cameras using film negatives, which make undetectable double-exposure trickery much more difficult, if not impossible.

With no new photographs forthcoming, the UFO excitement among Walters' supporters might have died down between May 1, 1988, and the publication of his book *The Gulf Breeze Sightings* in February 1990. But that was not to be. Fortuitously, a new series of public, multiple-witness sightings of the so-called red light UFO began on September 12, 1989, continuing up till the present, some two and a half years. If genuine, this long-running localized flap would be nearly unprecedented in the annals of UFO sightings.

Since publication of Walters' book (written with his wife Frances) his public image has suffered serious damage, chiefly from the accidental discovery of a UFO model resembling the object in his pictures. It was found buried under insulation in the attic of his old home. Thomas Smith, Jr., a young friend of Walters', testified that he saw Walters fake UFO pictures using models and double exposures.

In a move which could bolster Walters' sagging fortunes, his supporters have laid emphasis on the public sightings and reports from individuals who claim to have seen UFOs "just like Ed's." (See Barbara Becker's article on the question of these "me-too" sightings.) Dr. Maccabee lectured on this subject to the 1991 Mutual UFO Network symposium. His lecture was titled "Gulf Breeze Without Ed."

It is not that easy, however, to separate Walters from the "red light UFO," hereafter "RUFO." Let me describe the first RUFO sightings and Walters' connection with them. I will also put on record testimony linking Walters with alleged UFO hoax balloons.

Beginning of the "wave"

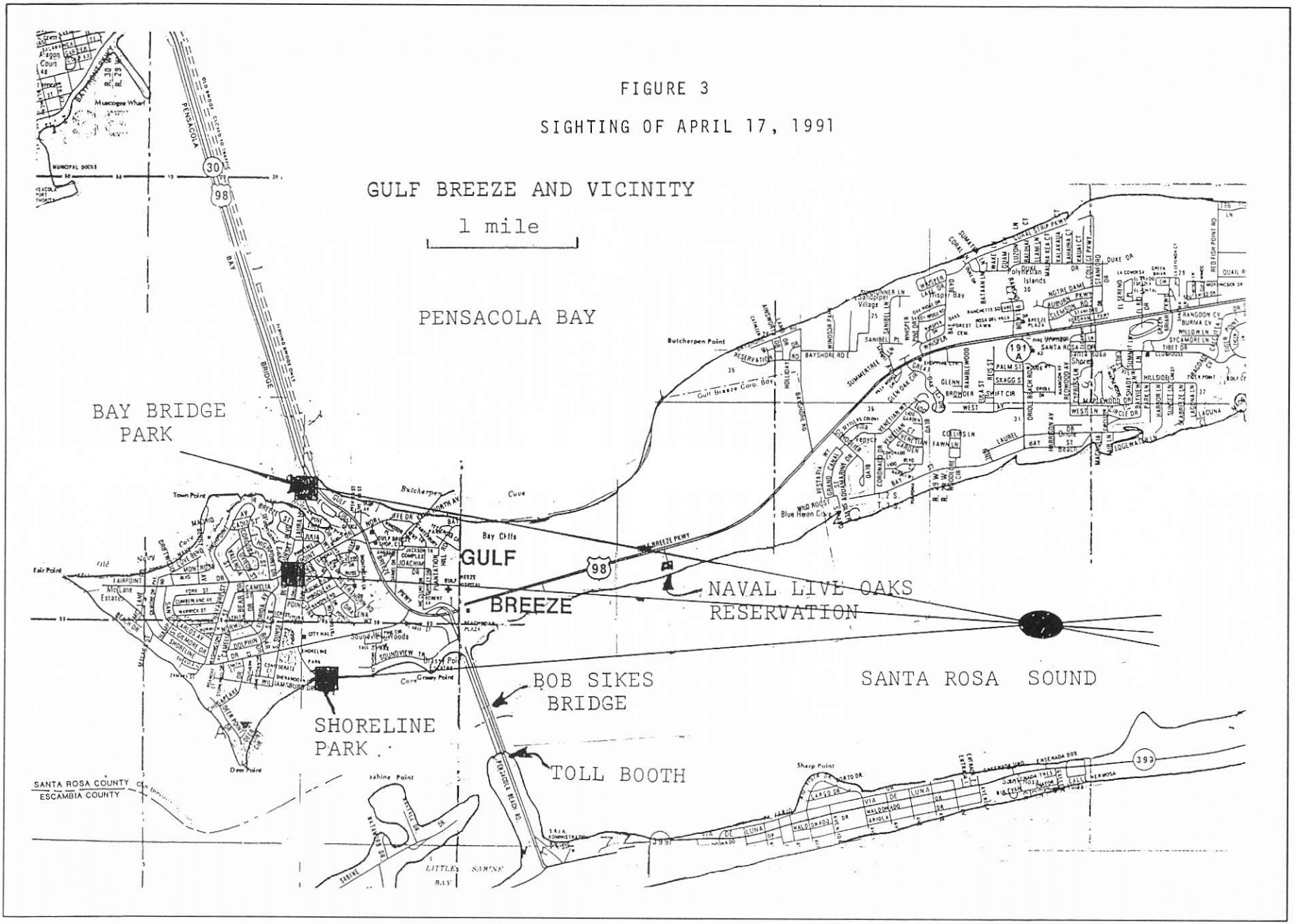
In a most serendipitous fashion the first RUFO sighting coincided with a MUFON meeting in Pensacola, Florida, near Gulf Breeze on September 12, 1989. Walters arrived late and brought members outside to observe a bright red light hanging in the sky (*MUFON UFO Journal*, December 1989). The object ascended into the broken cloud cover. It was visible for some seven minutes. Gary Watson, currently the chief investigator for the Pensacola MUFON group, told the press, "I saw a true UFO along with the other witnesses." In my opinion his upscaling of this unspectacular nocturnal light into a "true UFO" says something about the mind-set the Pensacola group brought to the issue in question. Again, on January 8, 1990, Walters, accompanied by his wife, was the first person to see a red light in the night sky, this time over Gulf Breeze. He phoned a number of his supporters who arrived in time to take photographs. Brenda Pollack, an active member of the Pensacola group, wrote: "I saw a red light darting about, changing directions rapidly and erratically, then hovering at times, and moving very fast at times." Duane Cook, *Gulf Breeze Sentinel* editor, was more restrained. He wrote of a "faint red light standing still high in the sky . . . . I wasn't too impressed. A single unfamiliar light in the sky never did constitute a printable UFO sighting to me. And I certainly was not about to say I'd seen one myself based on what I was looking at now . . . . Dari [Cook's wife] was ecstatic at having finally seen the UFO . . . . I wasn't so sure."

The "darting about" reported by Pollack may have been caused by an autokinesis, a tendency of the eye to "see" nonexistent movement in a distant point source of light observed against a dark featureless background.

There was a full moon illuminating a layer of clouds at about 1300 feet. After the red light went out, the crowd

FIGURE 3

SIGHTING OF APRIL 17, 1991


GULF BREEZE AND VICINITY
1 mile
PENSACOLA BAY
BAY BRIDGE PARK
GULF BREEZE
NAVAL LIVE OAKS RESERVATION
SANTA ROSA SOUND
BOB SIKES BRIDGE
SHORELINE PARK
TOLL BOOTH
SANTA ROSA COUNTY
ESCAMBIA COUNTY
Butcherpen Point
Bay Cliffs
Sabine Point
Sharp Point
LITTLE SABINE BAY
Blue Heron Cir.
Gulf Breeze Pkwy
Gulf Breeze Cem.
Soundview Woods
Crawey Point
Deer Point
Fair Point
Town Point
Butcherpen Cove
Muscogee Wharf
Municipal Docks
Pensacola Bay Bridge
Old Federal Circle to Gravel
Bayshore Rd
Holiday Rd
Fiesta Island Rd
Red Fish Point Rd
Duke Dr
Notre Dame Pkwy
Auburn Pkwy
Clemson Rd
Summertree Ln
Sanibel Pl
Whisper Ln
Windsor Pl
Palm St
Skaggs St
Glenn Brower
Oriole Beach Rd
Laurel
Coolidge Dr
Venetian Ct
Grand Canal
Coastline Dr
Fawn Ln
Collins Ln
Woodbine
Magnolia
Laguna
Millside Dr
Rangoon Cv
Burma Cv
Tibet Dr
Stcambre Ln
Santa Rosa
Sharon
Jackson
Joachim
Camellia
Dolphin
Shoreline
Sound View Dr
Via De Luna
Malcomado
Ensenada Dr
Ensenada Blvd
Calle Mejicana
Bayou Grande
Old Fairpoint
McClane Estates
Sabine Point Dr
Sabine Point Cir
Sabine Point Ct
Sabine Point Ln
Fiesta Island Rd
Gulf Breeze Hospital
Gulf Breeze Post Office
City Hall
Shoreline Park
Yacht Basin
Navy
Old
Bay
Pensacola
Bridge
Municipal Docks
Muscogee Wharf
Lagoon Court

could see a *dark round shape* which eventually "disappeared in a cloud." The level of UFO mania present can be judged from the fact that no one there said, "That looks like it could be a flare hanging from a balloon some hoaxer is flying over our town," and no one considered the danger to air traffic posed by such a balloon hoax.

Tommy Smith's testimony

Thomas Smith, Jr., Walters' young friend mentioned above, is the source of an allegation linking Walters with a reported UFO hoax employing a balloon. In a phone conversation with me, Smith said Walters mentioned that during his residence in Costa Rica, he generated some UFO reports by inflating and releasing cleaner's garment bags, using first a hair dryer and then candles mounted at the bottom of the bags. Supposedly Walters boasted about this during the pre-RUFO period when he and another young male friend were, it is claimed, preparing the photographic hoax which resulted in *The Gulf Breeze Sightings*.

Hoaxes using garment bags are mentioned in the Condon Report (Case 18, pages 300-05) and in the *MUFON Field Investigator's Manual*, page 71.

If one believes that Walters did tell Smith of this hoax, this does not establish that the hoax actually happened in Costa Rica. It *would* indicate that Walters was thinking in those terms early on. (Skeptics would like to check on Walters' activities in that Central American nation, but his exact place of residence has never been revealed.)

I am confident Walters will dispute Smith's hoax-balloon statement, as he has rejected Smith's testimony in toto. Readers wishing to judge the relative credibility of Smith and Walters might consider these points:

(1) No reasonable motive has been advanced to explain why Smith would lie, whereas Walters has an obvious financial motive to lie if his claims are false.

(2) Smith has not acted in a vindicative or rash manner. When Smith told his attorney father about the hoax in January 1988, as Walters' claims and photos were first being publicized, neither of the Smiths was willing to go public. Both assumed Walters' bubble was sure to pop soon. Young Smith had—and has—good feeling toward Walters personally. "I had some of the best times in high school over there," he told the *Gulf Breeze Sentinel* (August 9, 1990). Smith's father confided his son's story to an attorney colleague and to Gulf Breeze Police Chief Jerry Brown. The Smiths went public only in June 1990, after the Walterses' book was on the mark and as the 1990 MUFON symposium, set in Pensacola, was about to give further exposure to something the Smiths knew to be a hoax.

(3) Smith offered to submit to a polygraph test administered by an independent agency if Walters, his wife, and his son (all alleged UFO witnesses) would do the same. The Walterses have yet to accept this challenge.

When a tape of young Smith's telling of his story was analyzed for voice stress, it was concluded that he was speaking the truth. Walters claims he has passed several lie-detector tests; they were, however, with examiners whom he hired. Realtor Charles Flannigan, on behalf of MUFON, discussed a polygraph test with Walters, who was "insulted" (*Sightings*, page 188). Flannigan made an appointment for Walters with polygraph examiner Hugh Jones. Walters did not appear. He would claim he was never told of the appointment. Readers must judge the likelihood that a businessman would make a professional appointment and not notify Walters. A few weeks after the aborted appointment, Walters set up his first self-sponsored polygraph test.

Red lights

Over a hundred of the RUFO sightings have occurred since the two recounted above. MUFON members, calling themselves the Gulf Breeze Research Team (GBRT), meet almost every night at the south end of the Pensacola Bay Bridge. I encourage any reader who finds himself in that area to join this skywatch and to let me know what he or she sees and films.

The typical description is of a red light motionless or moving slowly across the sky. A newly arrived tourist spoke of a "white light which turned a pulsating red . . . . It moved closer to us, then slowly turned away while fading and turning white and eventually blinking out." It never comes across the horizon. It just appears. Often it turns white just before going out. Other sequences of red and white light have occurred as well as brilliant bursts of white light. Sometimes a light has been seen descending from the RUFO. It has been reported to remain motionless in a wind or travel into the wind.

Let's test the balloon-borne-flare hoax hypothesis against the observational data.

A retired research-and-development test director, who (to avoid harassment) does not want his name revealed, has conducted experiments involving burning, photographing, and recording the spectra of highway flares. He finds that the igniter at one end burns a brilliant white for a short period. At the end of a normal burn the red light dims and turns white. Luminescent slag falls from the flare occasionally, providing the downward-moving light effect.

The experimenter has further demonstrated that a flare can be modified to achieve various effects. When he added chemicals from Fourth-of-July sparklers, he recreated the brilliant bursts of light. Flares could be reduced in length for shorter burns. The use of sections of two flares would produce a white-red-white-red combination. Tests show the intensity of the light of the flare varies during a burn, as noted by observers. (Copies of the experimenter's reports are available from me c/o CUFOS.)

Into-the-wind movement could be caused in some cases by a localized variation in wind direction not observable from the ground and at variance with the general direction of the wind at the altitude noted officially. Also note that the observation point described above is almost totally surrounded by water. On occasion our hypothetical hoaxer could be operating a tethered balloon from a boat

moving into the wind or remaining stationary in a wind. The operation of a boat without running lights for a short period of time would add merely one more offense to the crime of flying an unauthorized balloon at night without proper lights and with a dangerous incendiary device. For specifics, see FAA Regulations, Part 101.

The sudden appearance of the RUFO could be achieved by a delayed ignition device, probably a slow-burning fuse.

I believe I have shown that the observed characteristics of the RUFO are consistent with those of a flare suspended from a balloon.

Up, up, and away

A dark shape above the "UFO" lights is often reported. On September 22, 1991, the skywatchers saw a "UFO" near the moon. "As it crossed the bottom edge of the moon," one said, "I could see the darkish outline of structure above the white light which suddenly turned brilliant red." One person described the dark shape as "angular."

The sheer number of sightings has been said to argue against the hoax hypothesis on practical and economic grounds. In an article ("A Remote-Control Camera That Catches the Wind and Captures the Landscape") in the October 1990 issue of *Scientific American*, Forest Mims III reported an inexpensive method of sending up camera packages for amateurs to take aerial photographs. Plastic trash bags were filled with helium and grouped together in sufficient numbers to support the load.

The illustration for the article reveals an "angular" shape (as suggested on *IUR*'s cover). Inflated trash bags could be released with impunity. After the flare burned away, there would be nothing incriminating or suspicious about a trash bag lying on the ground or floating in the Gulf of Mexico.

Admitted hoax-flare balloons

The local MUFON group has observed what it acknowledges are flares suspended from balloons. Maccabee has written, "MUFON members have watched carefully and have seen clear evidence several times." This tells us that a hoaxed RUFO looks a lot like a "true" RUFO if careful observation is required to distinguish them. If some sightings are caused by balloons, why not all, with atmospheric conditions or distance making identification impossible in every instance?

The RUFO sightings and the more recent Mark II sightings of a ring of dimmer lights are unimpressive when compared to valid UFO sightings characterized by rapid movement across the sky, right-angle turns, the outdistancing of jets, huge size (as in Belgium and the Hudson River Valley), blindingly bright "searchlights" directed to the ground, or daylight sightings. For that matter, the Gulf Breeze public sightings pale beside the UFOs reported and allegedly photographed by Ed Walters.

April 1991 RUFO sightings

In his *IUR* article Maccabee discusses events on April 2, 6, and 17, 1991. The characteristics of these "UFOs" (bright lights varying between red and white, bursts of brilliant white light, slow movement, sudden appearance and disappearance) are consistent with my hypothesized balloon-borne flare. Some pyrotechnic material ignited by the flare could account for the nonperiodic flashing videotaped on the 17th.

Maccabee's centerpiece is the "UFO" of April 9, the one seen by GBRT witnesses at Shoreline Park and by three anonymous witnesses located some five miles from the park and much closer to the object. The GBRT members saw only a red light. The others saw a ring of steady red lights "on the lower portion of the object," as they described it. A witness saw a "riblike structure or indentations which were made visible by reflected light from the object."

The night of April 9 was noteworthy for two things: the first appearance of a *ring* of lights, later that fall to become commonplace, and Ed Walters' first use of his "elemuth," a device to locate and fix the direction and elevation of a sighted UFO. Again, Walters was the first to notice the distant light.

The testimony of the closer witnesses in the K Mart parking lot was probably unanticipated by my hypothetical hoaxer. If he or she was aware of Walters' new device, the hoaxer may have wanted to give Walters a target.

The K Mart witnesses were looking at the object from a distance of several miles and from a brightly lit parking lot. These factors combined with the intensity of the lights on the object would have made seeing difficult. I believe, however, that these witnesses may have actually seen a nonluminous object associated with the lights, as they reported. Responding to the Gulf Breeze area's intense UFO consciousness, they thought of the "superstructure" of a craft. I would think of the detail to be seen in a cluster of inflated trash bags or some other lifting device illuminated by a number of flares attached to a light-weight circular frame.

The hoaxer may have flown this device far from the park, tearing the glare from the combined flares would reveal too much of the lifting device to a closer observer.

Art Hufford's UFOs

Let us turn to sighting reports recounted in Art Hufford's *IUR* article. Hufford is president of the Pensacola MUFON organization.

Beginning on September 16, 1991, GBRT observers witnessed a ring of lights. Maccabee was on hand for the premiere of this new show. Photographs were taken. One appeared in *IUR* with Hufford's article.

The event is reminiscent of the first red-light UFO report of September 12, 1989, in that an objectively unimpressive sighting is immediately acclaimed as a marvel by observers whose perceptions and judgments have

been affected by a climate of unquestioning belief. The ring was in view only a little over a minute; it winked on dimly, winked off, and made no maneuvers, and yet Maccabee concludes a September 19, 1991, *Gulf Breeze Sentinel* article about the ring with these words from a witness and himself at the time of the sighting: "Woman: Yes, we did it. B.M.: No. *We* didn't. *They* did. But why? That is the remaining question."

Hufford reports that the ring of lights on later occasions revolved about its axis and was apparently attached to an opaque object which blocked out stars. We have previously heard of opaque objects associated with the RUFO. Critics think of these as balloons and proponents as alien spacecraft.

Note that these new lights are a different color (amber) and much dimmer than the old RUFO, suggesting that in this new era a hoaxer has graduated from flares or some other incendiary device to incandescent lights with an onboard power source. This evolution suggests less a superhuman ET technology than a hoaxer breaking in a new act for his waiting GBRT audience.

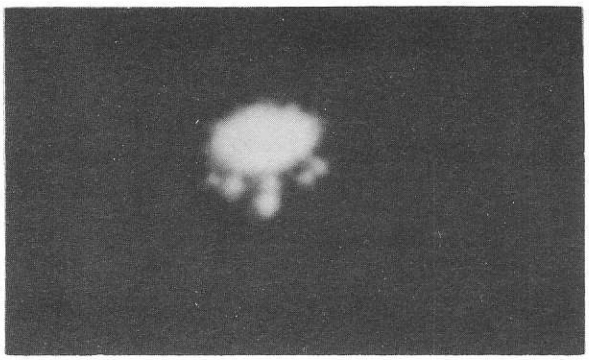
Hufford offers a sketch of a typical Ed Walters "UFO" next to a similar-looking photo of the ring of lights, with the implication that one validates the other. Instead, I believe one could look at the photograph as the result of a hoaxer's lofting a lighted object *designed* to resemble one of Walters' published photographs.

I contend that any UFO that resembles a Walters photograph loses rather than gains credibility by that association. Cutting through the mountain of controversy surrounding these images, let me draw readers' attention to sketches of Walters' photos showing him in a towel shaking his fists at an intruding "UFO" and the family dog apparently inured to such goings-on. Any reader who chooses to take seriously such obviously staged photos is welcome to do so.

I believe that the local MUFON people who are the audience for my hypothetical hoaxer are sincere people convinced they are at last seeing extraterrestrial UFOs. Most UFO sightings are just subjects for study and debate within the ufological community. In the case of these public sightings, we are getting into an area of real-life concern. Matters of life and death may be involved. Mayor Gray of Gulf Breeze told me that when President Bush visited the Pensacola Naval Air Station in March 1992, Air Force One came in for a landing passing over Pensacola Bay in the area where these "UFOs" or hoax aerial devices are sighted. Private and military aircraft fly there day after day and night after night.

I have heard that the Federal Aviation Administration is investigating these sightings. I know local authorities are concerned about the possibility of an aerial collision with a hoax balloon and its cargo or the fall of such cargo onto people and property. The military should also be concerned.

I challenge Maccabee to put some Fund for UFO Research money to work in Gulf Breeze arranging for a standby small plane or helicopter to pursue these reputed UFOs with searchlights and video cameras.



Ring of lights photographed by Patti Weatherford on November 5, 1991

The members of the GBRT are good citizens, I am sure. I urge them to establish some kind of hot-line contact with local authorities—military, FAA, civic—to alert them the instant a sighting occurs. Certainly a technology that can see in the dark in combat in Kuwait can settle the question: UFO or hoax? ✦

EDITORIAL—*continued from page 11*

against "those who have no demonstrated facility to reason." In this instance Kurtz sternly admonished the nobody to cease and desist.

But when somebodies—in other words, debunkers with names, public associations with CSICOP, and publishing contracts with the Kurtz-headed Prometheus Books—have indulged in rhetoric hardly less goofy, Kurtz has been the soul of tolerance. In one of debunking's more hilarious moments, Klass pronounced ufology virtually tantamount to Communism. Speaking over the phone to an astonished University of Nebraska administrator, he declared that "as a patriotic American I very much resent" ufologists' cover-up charges against the U.S. government. In making such charges, he reasoned (if that verb applies here), ufologists "seek what the Soviet Union does—to convey to the public that our government cannot be trusted."

Though I tried, I could not get a single CSICOP official to acknowledge that these words were preposterous and outrageous. To the contrary, CSICOP's then-Executive Director Mark Plummer told me he found nothing objectionable about them, and *SI* editor Kendrick Frazier waxed indignant that *I* had presumed to criticize Klass in print on this score (*SI*, Summer 1987, page 334), blandly claiming—though failing to produce documentation when I challenged him on the point—that my charges were "malicious and known by [me] to be false." Ironically, only

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THE INVENTION OF A GULF BREEZE UFO

BY BARBARA BECKER

Barbara Becker is a St. Louis-based UFO investigator.

"Since November 1987 there have been more than 260 reports of UFO sightings in the Gulf Breeze, Florida, area." So begins the abstract of Bruce Maccabee's "Gulf Breeze Without Ed" published in the 1990 MUFON symposium proceedings. Two hundred sixty reports seems pretty remarkable, but how many of those reports have been completely investigated, and how many are anecdotal, hearsay testimony?

A criticism has been leveled that the first group of reports from Gulf Breeze, for the time period coinciding with the first five Ed Walters photos, are invalid because the reports were taken anywhere from two weeks to nine months after the sighting and in all cases only after exposure to Walters' photos.

Bruce Maccabee dismisses this as simple debunkery, but in fact it is more than that.

A great deal of research and study has gone into the evaluation of eyewitness testimony and memory research. (See, for example, Elizabeth Loftus' classic *Memory* [1980].) Eyewitness testimony is fallible and memory imperfect. Often the information is recorded inaccurately; sometimes it is influenced and changed after retrieval. What follows is a brief discussion of how memory research can be applied to all UFO cases with the Hufford case as an example.

THE NATURE OF MEMORY

What is memory? Memory is a compendium of life experiences, stored and categorized according to importance. There are different ways of storing information depending on how long we want to keep it. If it is a transient event, such as remembering a phone number we will never use again, we may place it in short-term memory and allow it to fade. If it is a number we will use again, we can memorize it by repeating or rehearsing it until it is securely placed in long-term memory ready for retrieval at a later time.

Not every event or every moment of our lives becomes a part of memory, of course. There are three distinct stages, and information must make it through each to become a part of memory. The first stage is called Sensory Register (SR). It does just what the name implies; it registers information collected from the senses. It is short-lived, and the content is constantly changing as new sensory information replaces the old. SR will hold a visual image for less than a second before it must be transferred into short- or long-term memory or be lost.

The second stage, Short-Term Memory (STM), is an active part of memory. For anything to enter STM we must give it our attention or focus on it. Short-term memory does not hold much, nor does it hold it for long.

Information entering STM seems clear and is easy to remember if done so immediately. But it can be lost quickly, within 15 to 20 seconds, if not rehearsed. Rehearsal is the process of repeating or visualizing what is to be remembered; without it STM cannot hold new information for longer than 30 seconds. The longer a new fact is kept active through rehearsal, the better the chance it will get into LTM. Should the new information be kept active, it will then be transferred into LTM where it will be associated with and added to already existing information.

Unlike STM the final stage, Long-Term Memory (LTM), is inactive. It is a storehouse whose capacity is limitless. It can hold memories from a few minutes old to a lifetime long. Memories are not stored like one long movie, naturally; rather, we keep only bits and pieces. What we call remembering is actually the act of calling into STM what has been stored in LTM. Unfortunately, each time a memory is recalled into STM, there is the danger it will be altered or reconstructed from new, post-event information. Misleading postevent information is most effective if the memory for the original event is allowed to fade. Since the information in LTM is fragmented, we tend to fill in the gaps with what we think should be there whether it is accurate or not. Memory can also be compromised by already existing information which shares common attributes. The new information then becomes integrated and redefined at the time of retrieval. Eventually one memory begins to resemble the other and may replace the original.

The inability to recall or retrieve a memory is called forgetting. It happens to each of us every day. We can forget for a number of reasons, for example "forgetting" to do something we really don't want to do or forgetting something we find unpleasant. This is called motivated forgetting. We can also forget because the memory was never stored in the first place; perhaps the event didn't last long enough or maybe it didn't seem important enough to get into LTM. Another possibility is that the original event is interferred with by new events which inhibit the recall of the original memory.

In 1885, based on personal experiences, researcher Hermann Ebbinghaus developed what he called the "forgetting curve," still regarded as valid.

According to Ebbinghaus, within hours of an event the amount of information retained is only about 58 percent; after one day it is 30 percent, and by the third day is 25 percent, after which forgetting becomes more gradual. At 30 days after the event, retention levels off at about 20 percent.

In short, many factors determine what is kept and what is discarded in memory. Sometimes the choice isn't ours to make, because the process happens below our level of awareness.

Reconstruction or reinvention?

When I read "Gulf Breeze Without Ed," I wondered how many of the reports coming out of the Gulf Breeze area would hold up applying what is known about memory. I decided to use the Hufford case because there were two witnesses and information regarding the event was easily accessible.

I conducted two telephone interviews with the Huffords. The first, with Mary Hufford, was on Thursday, February 13, 1992, the second with Art Hufford on Tuesday, February 18. Zan Overall supplied additional data.

Art and Mary Hufford claim to have seen the same "UFO" as Ed Walters. Maccabee reports in the MUFON proceedings that this happened on November 11, 1987, but the Huffords have determined it was on the weekend of November 14-15, 1987, most probably Saturday the 14th. They were returning home from church, which Hufford has been attending for 49 years, since childhood. While proceeding over Bayou Boulevard, a frequent route, Art, who was driving, noticed an unusual object "hoovering" in the sky. He called Mary's attention to it but continued driving, catching only glimpses. Neither witness is absolutely sure of the time, but believes it must have been around 4:30 p.m. because the sun had not yet set.

Speaking for himself and his wife, Art stated that features such as portholes or windows were not visible. He comments, "It was bright, oval in shape with a light on top and some sort of 'shroud' or projection on the bottom." He later revised this to a "brightly lit white sort of band across the bottom."

Mary Hufford told me that she saw no lights on the object. She qualified her statement with the remark that since the sun had not yet set, no lights were needed by the "UFO." Since I had been led to believe she had seen exactly what her husband had seen, I asked if she was sure. After a long pause she revised her comment; there was one light on top but none on the bottom. Art Hufford says he viewed the object for 15 to 20 seconds before losing sight of it behind the trees.

(I should insert here that Zan Overall and I have been denied access to the original report. I wrote to the investigator, Vicki Lyons, but received no response. In a March 4, 1992, letter to me, Carol Salisberry states that when she and her husband Rex were state section directors for MUFON, they, too, were denied access to the Hufford report. She states that Lyons told her that Art's and Mary's stories did not match, nor did they see what Ed Walters reported.)

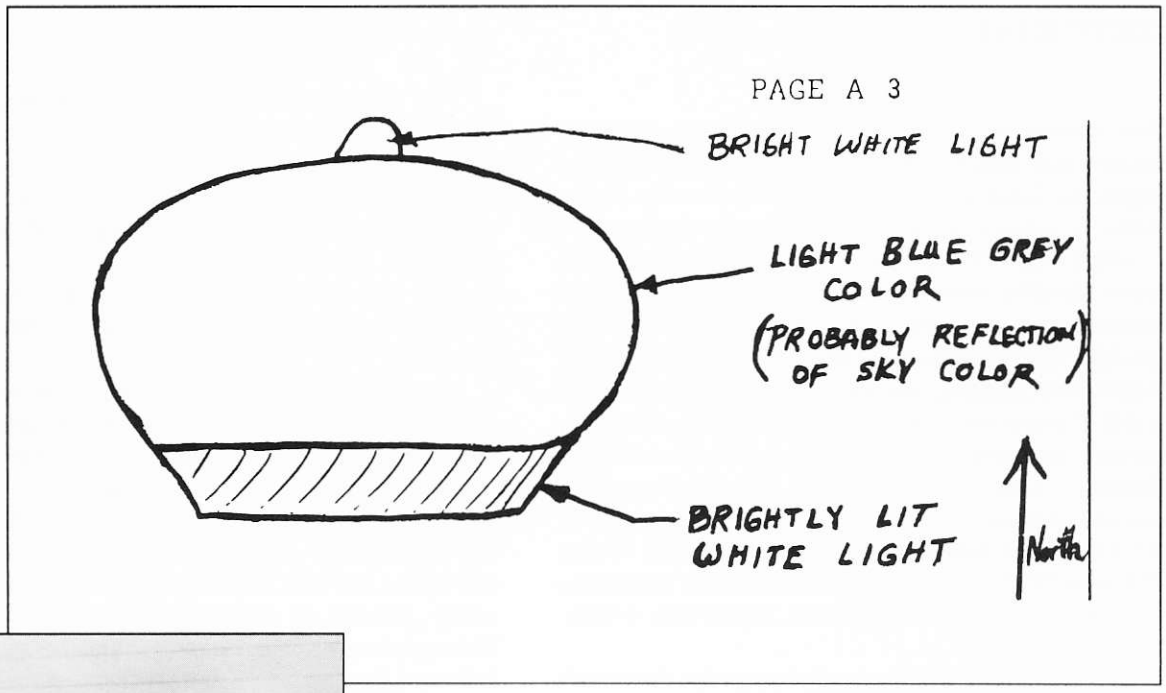
The Huffords did not discuss what they had seen until they arrived home, at which time they made a conscious decision to forget about it. It was not until three weeks later, the first week of December 1987, that they saw Walters' photos in the newspaper. Art Hufford "unequivocally," according to Maccabee, realized "what he saw was exactly the same thing as shown in the pictures." In February 1988 the *Pensacola News Journal* ran a four-page supplement on the Walters photos. After that story ran, almost three months after the original event, Hufford began telling his friends and family that he and his wife had seen something unusual in the skies over Gulf Breeze.

In March or April 1988 Hufford agreed to an interview with the *Gulf Breeze Sentinel.* He cannot remember the reporter or the date. He then taped a segment for *Unsolved Mysteries.* He thinks it was August, though he isn't sure. It might have aired in October, but once again, he doesn't know for sure. Eight or nine months later, not sure again, he and Mary were approached by MUFON and asked to complete a report which included the drawing depicted in the 1990 MUFON proceedings. In an interview with Zan Overall, Hufford was asked if his sighting had been published anywhere. He replied, "I am not aware that it has been." Considering Art Hufford is president of the MUFON chapter investigating the current rash of "red-light UFOs" seen in the area and that the 1990 MUFON symposium was held in Pensacola, would it not be reasonable to think he was at least aware his story was published in the proceedings? It seems Hufford's memory is quite fallible.

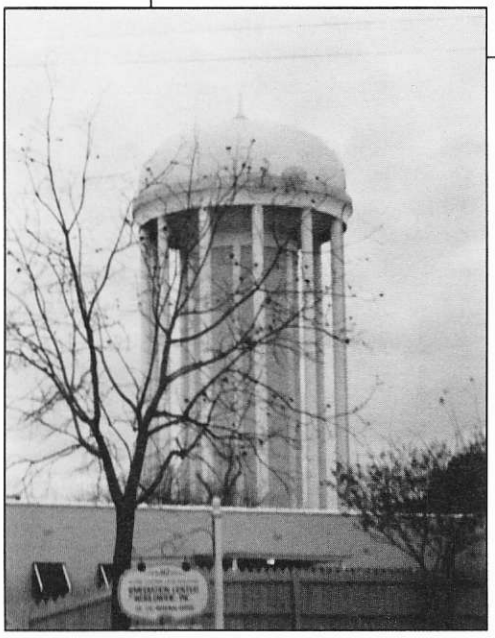
(When I interviewed Hufford, I asked him a few questions regarding his environment to test his recall for everyday events. There are two banking establishments on Gregory Street, the same street his church sits on. He was unable to name them and seemed uncertain that they were even there. I also asked him about the water tower. It took several minutes of discussion before he recalled seeing a water tower. The photo shows the water tower in relation to the church.)

What did Hufford see that day? Something in the sky caught his attention. At that moment, however, he could not recognize it as something familiar. Hufford saw the object only in glimpses while driving with the entire duration of observation lasting 15 to 20 seconds. The eyes hold an image only for a fraction of a second; images change constantly as a part of the visual process. Since he was driving his attention would have been divided, whatever images would have been stored would have been fragmented and probably not cohesive enough to make a positive identification.

A prerequisite to information storage is that what has been perceived must be considered important enough to get a place in memory and it must be kept active long enough to get into LTM. While what the Huffords saw was a curiosity, it was apparently not important enough to stop the car to take a better look. It was so inconsequential that



Sketch by Art Hufford of object seen in November 1987



The Pensacola water tower

it was not even discussed until after they arrived home—thereby eliminating the rehearsal process which is extremely important to information storage. They were also motivated to forget the incident, since at least in Hufford's then-opinion only beer-drinking hillbillies see UFOs. The couple then made a conscious decision to forget the episode until they saw Walters' photos three weeks later. It was three months later before they started telling their friends and eight to nine months before they made a report to MUFON. That leaves a lot of time for the memory to be corrupted.

Several factors go into eyewitness testimony and the effect of postevent information. Time interval between the event and the recall of the memory is crucial. The longer the time between the event and the recall, the greater the effect of the misleading information. Three weeks had passed before the Huffords saw Walters' photos the first time. Even under good conditions, by this time, 75 percent of the information would have been lost. Then it must be considered that they had made a conscious decision to forget about what they had seen, allowing their initial impressions and actual perceptions of the original event to fade. Postevent information, in the form of Walters' photos and other details concerning his alleged experiences, has now entered the Huffords' store of information. Each time they retell the story, more specifically, recall the event into STM, there exists the possibility that new and misleading information will replace or add to already existing information.

There is really no way to know what Art Hufford saw that day. Too much time has passed, and too much misleading and inaccurate postevent information has become available.

A photograph taken in Pensacola accompanies this paper. It is of a water tower which Hufford would see each time he went to his church. I have also included a copy of a Hufford drawing printed in the 1990 MUFON symposium proceedings. No, Hufford could not have seen this water tower from where he believes he saw the "UFO." I am not saying he misidentified a water tower. What I am saying is that there is a striking similarity between the tower and the "UFO"—a similarity too close to be coincidental. In

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EDITORIAL—*continued from page 18*

Klass seemed to find his words embarrassing. After the administrator leaked a memo outlining Klass' peculiar allegations, Klass threatened to sue the university. Nonetheless, he assures me, he still stands by the sentiments.

Other CSICOP notables such as James Oberg and Robert Sheaffer have leveled similarly strange charges against ufologists, depicting us as cryptofascists (in *UFOs and Outer Space Mysteries* [1981] Oberg compared UFO groups to the "bizarre[,] irrational . . . cults which preceded the fall of democratic Germany in the 1920s"), as money-grubbing exploiters, or as radical anti-science cultists (Sheaffer's particular hobbyhorse). Gary P. Posner, an associate of Klass, Oberg, and Sheaffer and a member of CSICOP's UFO Subcommittee, once opined (*SI*, Winter 1978, page 79) that believers in UFOs and other anomalous phenomena may be suffering from "ambulatory schizophrenia."

For CSICOP it is not enough to say that those with whom it disagrees are wrong. It must also depict them as loathsome human beings. In the eyes of this Shiite-skeptic sect, proponents of anomalies and the paranormal are agents of the Great Satan of "irrationality," defined as any view, however arrived at, whatever the supporting evidence, that differs from CSICOP's.

Thus we could only expect CSICOP co-founder and debunking hero James "The Amazing" Randi not to content himself with the simple, and defensible, argument that Geller uses magic tricks rather than psychokinesis to bend metal, but to charge Geller with appalling moral lapses, such as a role in what Randi alleges was an American scientist's suicide (the man, his death certificate shows, did *not* commit suicide). CSICOP kept mum all the while. Kurtz's belated alibi is that the Lone Voice Defending Rationality did not speak because Randi "was not acting as an agent of CSICOP." Not coincidentally, CSICOP is being sued along with Randi because until now CSICOP and Randi, its most famous member, seemed virtually indistinguishable; until the lawsuits commenced, to all appearances that perception never bothered the former. In fact, Randi's attorneys argue that their client *was* "acting as the agent of CSICOP."

It certainly would have been out of character for Kurtz and company, whom sociologists of science Harry Collins and Trevor Pinch have called a "scientific-vigilante organization" which threatens science's "professional and political integrity" (*Times Higher Educational Supplement*, October 21, 1988), to urge rhetorical restraint of a debunking superstar. At any rate, that is, until attorneys for the aggrieved (who include not just Geller but Eldon Byrd, target of another set of accusations by Randi) came calling. Now, however, in the fashion of a latter-day Uriah Heep, Kurtz piously declares that as a "scientific body" CSICOP does not engage in personal attacks (*SI*, Winter 1992, page 116). A death-bed conversion if ever there was one.

So what are we to think?

First of all, I should make clear—as CSICOP is not known to do when it is on the attack—that not everyone ought to be tarred with the same broad brush. I have friends in CSICOP, individuals I respect and whose views and insights I listen to respectfully even when I disagree with them; I might add that we often agree, too. The remarks here are directed to CSICOP's leaders, who with some exceptions have distinguished themselves chiefly by their arrogance, bombast, and extremism.

Second, as any *IUR* reader knows, there is no shortage of UFO claims deserving of skeptical scrutiny, and the UFO literature, for all its faults, is replete with this sort of internal criticism. In fact, the virtual absence of internal criticism—at least *public* internal criticism, the only kind that matters here—within CSICOP has led to its current difficulties. No CSICOP/*SI* writer rose up to protest, even mildly, Randi's, or anybody else's, rhetorical excesses. The motto seemed to be, Never give a sucker an even break. In the end, it seems, one of those suckers—a sucker with the money to afford high-priced lawyers—may be about to break CSICOP.

No one who believes in free expression favors the use of libel suits to silence dissent, and of course that is what CSICOP says Geller seeks to do. CSICOP's assertions would be more credible if they came from an organization with a different track record, in other words, an organization that really *did* conduct scientific investigations. Such investigations would lead it to more modest conclusions about contentious and difficult matters (which, were CSICOP capable of such thoughtful reflection, should have been what it learned from the "Mars effect" fiasco chronicled in "Starbaby") and to a recognition of the simple truth that where some things are concerned, when all of the evidence is not yet in, reasonable and honorable persons will inevitably disagree. Instead, we have witnessed the spectacle of an organization in many ways out of control, so far gone into self-righteousness—really, what rational human being would claim to be the "lone voice defending rationality"?—that it appears convinced those who reject its rigid scientism are not only mistaken but irrational, even evil.

For what it's getting, CSICOP has no one to blame but itself.—*Jerome Clark*

JOURNAL OF UFO STUDIES, VOL. 3

Just released! This issue contains articles on:

"Folkloric Dimensions of the UFO Phenomenon," by Thomas E. Bullard; "Psychosocial Characteristics of Abductees: Results from the CUFOS Abduction Project," by Mark Rodeghier and others; "Double Abduction Case," by John S. Carpenter; and a Research Note on the Delphos, Kansas, soil analysis.

Copies are available for $18.00 from CUFOS, 2457 West Peterson, Chicago, IL 60659.

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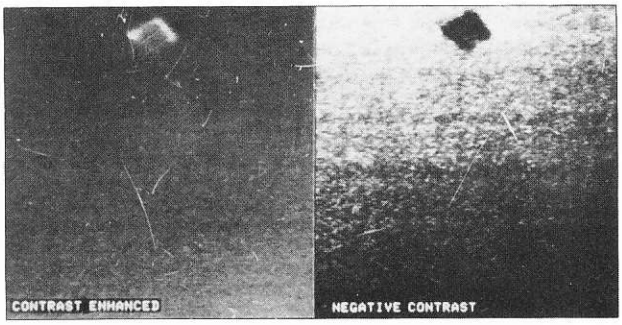

Figure 4: From the Hamazaki videotape

was unusual but did not report the sighting.

Whenever an unexpected image such as this turns up, I suspect either a film flaw or some ordinary object which attracted no interest because it was ordinary. One typical unexpected type of "UFO," for example, is a nearby bug. (I was asked to analyze a set of Japanese photos which contained dark spots against the background. The cameraman never saw the "UFOs" he photographed.) Bug images typically are smeared by motion and defocus; bugs are small and must be close to the lens to make sizeable images.

Clearly the bug explanation does not apply here, nor does the film flaw explanation. The shape does not seem to be that of a typical balloon or kite. Hence, as with the Lindstrom and Hamazaki sightings, we are left with a mysterious object which has now appeared at least three times in widely separated areas of the world. ✦

INVENTION—*continued from page 21*

compromise memory information already contained in memory is unconsciously mixed with new information. The result is a memory that resembles and accommodates both pieces of information.

Art and Mary Hufford's report was taken at face value. They said they saw a UFO; thus it was assumed they saw a UFO. Did it not occur to anyone to investigate another possible explanation? Bayou Boulevard, after all, is on the flight path for Pensacola Municipal Airport. I doubt it, since the report was taken nine month later. The only reason to call what the Huffords saw that day a UFO is that the report is incomplete; whatever they saw *is* unidentified and will remain unidentified. It is easy to group uninvestigated unresearched cases into the "unidentified" category, but there is absolutely no usable UFO information that comes out of that kind of blind-faith anecdote-collecting.

LESSONS

Since November 1990 Gulf Breeze has been inundated with what have been called "red-light" UFOs—UFOs that practically appear on command when TV crews are present—UFOs whose description greatly resembles the descriptions of flares and candles in the Condon Report. Their image, as photographed by Art Hufford and reproduced on the cover of the January/February 1992 issue of *IUR*, mimics the image in a photograph personally taken by Allan Hendry of a prank balloon (see *The UFO Handbook* [1979], page 47). Out of the hundred-plus red light UFO reports coming out of Gulf Breeze, how many have actually been thoroughly investigated? How many are after-the-fact anecdotes? The data on eyewitness testimony and memory should also be applied to these reports. An investigation is more than just the taking of a note that a red light was seen.

The reports coming out of Gulf Breeze should be studied not as just UFO reports but also for the value they have as a study in the mechanics of memory and the fallibility of eyewitness testimony. The information in this paper, while concentrating on the Gulf Breeze reports, is by no means limited to Gulf Breeze. All investigators should familarize themselves with memory research and apply its lessons to the cases they are addressing. ✦

LETTERS

UFOLOGY'S CRISIS CONTINUED

To the editor:

The letters published in the "Ufology in Crisis" forum (January/February *IUR*) beautifully illustrate how deeply our approaches to the phenomenon are mired in the swamps of subjective speculation, imaginative yearning, and 20th-century American culture. Researchers need to more fully understand their methods before any major progress can be made. Sensory perception, hypnosis, and dreaming—all functions of the human brain—need to be understood in considerably greater detail from physiological, psychological, and parapsychological perspectives. After all, if alien entities are so preoccupied with the human brain, UFO researchers should also so be.

It is important, of course, that "external" research continue on such topics as crash-retrievals, landing traces, implants, fetuses, and so on. If it were ever financially possible, a long-term remote or covert monitoring of known abductees and contactees (done with their consent, of course) might be fruitful. Again, this is a matter of matching the activities of alien "monitors." It seems unlikely to me that the photographs or videotapes of aerial phenomena, as

such, will ever enable researchers to answer any of the major questions of ufology, except perhaps insofar as such phenomena are related to known abductions. "Hard facts" are essential to the legitimization of ufology in the scientific community. Such acceptance would greatly enrich and accelerate research possibilities.

In a wider context researchers need to be aware of their culture-bound points of view. The wider circulation and publication of UFO research in other cultures cannot help correcting cultural myopia. Only a worldwide intercultural and interdisciplinary approach can truly give a balanced view of the UFO phenomenon.

Michael D. Lampen
San Francisco, California

To the editor:

For the most part during the modern era of UFO history, the general public and mainstream American ufology have thought that UFOs are extraterrestrial spacecraft. Researchers who don't buy the "It can't be, therefore it isn't" policy on UFOs followed by establishment science and the government are ignored, openly ridiculed, or treated condescendingly by mass media. The anecdotal testimony and whatever circumstantial physical evidence ufologists cite to support their extraordinary claim of UFO reality cannot be employed to test this hypothesis consistent with the stringent requirements of the scientific method. Consequently establishment science has never taken the time to seriously examine the data compiled by UFO researchers.

The UFO reports generating this controversy have generally fit into one of six categories delineated by J. Allen Hynek: nocturnal lights, daylight discs, radar/visuals, and close encounters of the first, second, and third kinds. Approximately 10 years ago, however, the level of strangeness of the phenomenon increased dramatically. It was postulated that selected earthlings were being abducted and subjected to a medical examination on a periodic basis, beginning in their childhood.

What some have called close encounters of the fourth kind appear to have beenthe stimulus for a series of events that have opened up a floodgate of evidence-free speculation which constitutes the crisis in today's ufology: the subject seemingly has reached the limit of plausibility, even for veteran ufologists. For example, some researchers contend that these alleged encounters are an intrinsic part of a genetic experimentation program conducted by aliens. Acceptance of this possibility entails serious consideration of other incredible concepts such as human/alien breeding, missing fetuses, and hybrid children.

Moreover, if you accepted the above CE4 scenario, why stop there? What about the stories and rumors regarding alien underground bases in the American Southwest, alien spacecraft being back-engineered and tested by government scientists, treaties between aliens and the U.S. government, man-eating aliens, and all the rest? Just where do you draw the line? Whom do you believe?

Some of this speculation does logically follow from what has been reported over the last 44 years and *could* make "sense," if there is such a notion associated with the UFO phenomenon. The rest of it is undoubtedly just the product of someone's overworked imagination or pure fabrication suitable only for publication in sleazy tabloid "newspapers." While this type of sensationalist trash has certainly put ufology into the mainstream media spotlight and raised public awareness of the subject, it has also given the subject an undeserved crackpot connotation it has been attempting to overcome. UFO debunkers now have an even easier target to discredit using their condemnation-through-generalization tactics.

While ufology cannot control the crazies and fast-buck artists who threaten to destroy whatever credibility it has struggled to attain, it can exercise more restraint with respected to unwarranted speculation by responsible researchers. Effort should be directed instead toward gathering as many substantive, quantitative data as the phenomenon grudgingly reveals and trying to develop means of testing the various hypotheses now under consideration. If the mystery of the UFO phenomenon can be solved, it will be accomplished by the application of good, fundamental science to testable hypotheses.

Robert A. Galganski
West Seneca, New York

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